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August 6, 1957

Dr. Robert S. Morrison
Biological and Medical Research
The Rockefeller Foundation
49 West 49th Street
New York, New York

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Dear Dr. Morrison:

This Medical School initiated a program in medical genetics with the appointment of Dr. Newton Morton as Assistant Professor of Anatomy. Now, a Department of Medical Genetics has been formally organized, under the Chairmanship of Professor Joshua Lederberg. Dr. Lederberg retains a 1/2 time appointment in the Genetics Department of the College of Agriculture.

With combined support from the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation, the National Institutes of Health and the State Legislature, a new research wing is being constructed at the Medical School at a cost of two million dollars. This will afford an opportunity for the Medical Genetics Department to be housed in modern laboratory facilities, including space for the rounding out of its initial staff with a third staff member. After careful consideration, the Medical School has endorsed the appointment of Kimball C. Atwood, M.D., as Associate Professor of Medical Genetics. The Medical School will assume the full cost of Dr. Morton's salary, as it has its share of Professor Lederberg's. Unfortunately, we are unable to meet the cost of Dr. Atwood's appointment from this year's budget, and we are, therefore, requesting the assistance of the Rockefeller Foundation to help us expand our program. We propose to assume 1/3 of the salary cost after two years, 2/3 after four years, and his full salary after five years. Assuming an average salary of $10,000 during this interval, we will require approximately $37,500 from the Foundation for this purpose.

We shall require a like amount to complete the costs of furnishing and equipping the laboratories. As the space allotted to Medical Genetics (about 4,000 feet) represents about ten percent of the new wing, this will cap an investment of about $200,000 from other sources in these facilities.

All together, we are, therefore, asking the Foundation for $75,000 to be expended on behalf of Medical Genetics during the next five years. We would be happy to pool this amount with the $25,000 already allocated to the Medical School for the initiation of Dr. Morton's program, if we might have the use of the total funds for the five year period.

In view of the possibility that grants for smaller amounts may become available for various aspects of the program on one hand, and that unexpected needs may arise on the other, we could make even more advantageous use of these funds if they were available without limit as to time, that is, as an unrestricted grant. They could then continue to be used as insurance to underwrite projects for which

other financing would become available in due course, and in this way their effectiveness would be multiplied. However, we will be more than pleased to operate within a five-year term, if that is more in line with the Foundation's policies.

Dr. Atwood could not be formally approached until we could make him a concrete offer. He has, however, expressed a tangible interest in our program, and we are hopefully confident that he will accept a reasonable offer. At the present time, he is a Senior Biologist at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, where, unfortunately, the research opportunities are not matched by the academic facilities for the collaboration with and training of graduate students.

The Department of Medical Genetics has been conceived primarily as a research unit, with the responsibility of collaborating with other members of the Staff in both research and teaching activity. Dr. Morton is already engaged in studies of muscular dystrophy and spherocytosis in man, both from a biometric and a physiological angle. Dr. Lederberg will continue his work on the genetics of bacteria and viruses. Dr. Atwood is well known for his work on the cellular lesion in radiation injury, having made a superb application of the technical properties of Neurospora spores for the purpose. He, as well as Dr. Morton and Dr. Lederberg, is also deeply interested in the genetics of somatic cells, and has begun some preliminary studies of somatic mutation in human erythrocytes with respect to serological properties. His position at Oak Ridge has not furnished an opportunity to exploit his medical training, a qualification that adds to his aptitude for the present opportunity. In summary, it would be fair to characterize the theme of the Department of Medical Genetics as a primary concern for basic aspects of genetics, with diverse experimental materials, but an orientation towards medicine and the zeal to encourage those applications of genetics to medicine as their theoretical work unfolds. The Medical School feels that this is the soundest base on which to build applied studies, and the training of graduate students, residents, and postdoctoral fellows as practitioners of the various aspects of medical genetics. One advantage at Wisconsin that permits the development of this program on a broader base of theoretical work than elsewhere is the integration of the Medical School in a University setting, and in particular, the cooperation of the Medical Genetics group with the Genetics Department. The latter Department has already expressed its vital interest in Dr. Atwood's appointment, to the extent of offering him a comparable rank should he be appointed in the Medical School.

Some additional information on Dr. Atwood's background is enclosed.

It would suit our purposes if any grant could be made effective January 1, 1959, either for five years, or an indefinite term. We intent to proceed with an offer to Dr. Atwood as soon as we have assurance of the necessary starting funds.

Yours sincerely,

John L. Bowers

John Z. Bowers, M.D.
Dean

JZB:ca
cc: W.P. Peterson
Dr. Lederberg